Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information · Central News Section · New York

UNITED NATIONS

Prepared by Central News

DH/2104
19 March 1996

TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* Security Council demands Iraq allow immediate unrestricted access to Special Commission to conduct investigations; calls on Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone to accept outcome of country's elections.

* Conclusion of comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty cannot be deferred any longer, Secretary-General tells Disarmament Conference.

* Traditional attitudes to family responsibilities could only be changed when double burden of women trying to manage public and private lives is recognized, expert panel tells Commission on Status of Women.

* UNCTAD and WTO to produce action-plan to increase Africa's export-oriented production and improvement of diversification and markets.

* UN launches $57 million appeal for humanitarian needs in Sierra Leone.

* All-inclusive Intra-east Timorese Dialogue opens in Austria.

* UN provides Electoral Assistance for Comoros in election process.

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The Security Council has demanded that Iraq allow immediate, unconditional and unrestricted access to the Special Commission to carry out its investigations. In a Presidential statement today, the Council noted with growing concern that an inspection team was denied immediate and unconditional access to a site. Council President Ambassador Legwaila Joseph Legwaila of Botswana, said in the statement that the Council however noted access was only granted after unacceptable delays, and pointed out that such delays constitute clear violations of the provisions of the Council's resolutions.

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In a separate meeting today, the Security Council called on the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone to accept the outcome of the country's elections which ended last Friday. It has also urged the Front to enter into a full dialogue for peace. In a presidential statement, the Council welcomed the convening of the elections and congratulated the people on the courage and determination they showed in proceeding with the elections, despite difficulties and disruptions. The Council also stressed the importance it attached to a peaceful transition to civilian rule.

Council President Ambassador Legwaila Joseph Legwaila of Botswana, said the Council welcomed the commitment by the Chairman of the Provisional National Ruling Council to hand over authority by 31 March 1996 and called upon all concerned to cooperate fully with the newly-elected President and parliament. The Council was of the view that the circumstances created by the successful conclusion of the elections in Sierra Leone required redoubled efforts to end the fighting in that country.

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The conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty cannot be deferred any longer, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In a statement today to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, the Secretary-General stressed that the treaty must be concluded this year. Otherwise he said, a severe blow will be dealt to the nuclear non-proliferation regime, and thereby to peace and security as a whole.

Dr. Boutros-Ghali told the Conference on Disarmament that it was essential to overcome differences now, to bring to conclusion, over 30 years of efforts to ban all nuclear tests by international law, according to a UN Radio report from Geneva. There is no time to lose, the Secretary-General said, and the historic importance of these negotiations must not be underestimated. He called on all delegations whether they represented a large or small state, a state with nuclear weapons or one without, to show flexibility, open-mindedness, a spirit of compromise and a will to succeed. The international community clearly recognizes that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons are in the interest of all States, whether or not they have such weapons, he said.

Pointing out that the comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty would be an additional means of making the end of the cold war part of positive international law, the Secretary-General said it would also give new impetus to nuclear disarmament and make an invaluable contribution to the non-proliferation regime. It would also constitute an impediment to all qualitative development of nuclear weapons, the Secretary-General concluded.

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Traditional attitudes towards family responsibilities could only be changed when the double burden of women trying to manage their public and private lives was recognized, a panel of experts has told the Commission on the Status of Women. The Commission was discussing child and dependent care and the sharing of family responsibilities.

According to the experts, women made more sacrifices for the family and much of their work was unpaid. The experts said women also worked longer hours in the work place, but men had not made commensurate efforts at home. The experts also spoke of the need to involve all family members, when attempting to change behaviour, including the young, adults and the elderly.

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The Executive Heads of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), have agreed to produce a plan of action for increasing Africa's export-oriented production and the improvement of

export diversification and markets. Noting that Africa represented only 2 per cent of world trade, UNCTAD said whereas for other developing countries, improved market access is a major instrument for stimulating economic growth, for Africa the first challenge is to diversify its production base and to build up value-added supply capacity.

Welcoming the UN System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, launched yesterday, UNCTAD Secretary-General Rubens Ricupero said that unless supply capacities are strengthened, Africa runs the risk of being further marginalised in the world economy, because of the increasing premium which globalization and liberalization imposes on the efficient production of traded goods.

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The United Nations has appealed for $57 million over the next year to address the humanitarian needs in Sierra Leone that have resulted from five years of civil conflict. The inter-agency appeal for Sierra Leone, covering the period from March 1996 through February 1997, aims at meeting the emergency needs of the war-affected population, UN Spokesman Ahmad Fawzi said today.

Over the past five years, a cycle of violence has forced more than 2 million people to abandon their homes, he said. Resources are being sought by the United Nations and non-governmental organizations to provide relief assistance and to support local communities in their efforts to address the crisis. The appeal launched by the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs also covers programmes in the areas of food aid and production, health and nutrition, non-food aid to displaced and war-affected populations, assistance to children in especially difficult circumstances, education, demobilization and coordination of humanitarian assistance. The Spokesman said it was critical for support to be forthcoming immediately so that aid could be supplied or provided during the current dry season.

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A meeting of the all-inclusive Intra-east Timorese Dialogue opened in Austria today. The meeting, the second of its kind, was agreed upon by the Secretary-General and the Foreign Ministers of Indonesia and Portugal at their last round of talks on the question of East Timor, held in London this past January.

The 3-day meeting in Burg Schlaining does not represent a parallel negotiating track and will not address the political status of East Timor. It is a forum for continuing the free and informal exchange of views to explore ideas of a practical nature that might have a positive impact on the situation in East Timor and assist in the establishment of an atmosphere conducive to the achievement of a solution to the question of East Timor.

As on the previous occasion, the Secretary-General was asked to facilitate the follow-up meeting which is being attended by a United Nations observer. 30 East Timorese of all political opinions are participating in the meeting in their personal capacities.

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The UN Electoral Assistance Division has assisted the island nation of the Comoros in its election process which culminated in the presidential elections held

on 6th and 16th March. According to UN Spokesman Ahmad Fawzi, the Acting Director of the UN Electoral Assistance Division was in the Comoros to observe the elections and to coordinate the activities of the international observers for the first and second round of elections.

Both contenders - Mohammed Taki, the president-elect and his opponent Abbas Djoussof, said that for the first time since independence in 1975, the election of a president took place in a democratic, transparent and free atmosphere. They both expressed their appreciation to the United Nations and to the international community for assisting the electoral process and for the return of stability to that country.

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Daily Highlights

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UNITED NATIONS

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20 March 1996

WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* New walls of misunderstanding in post cold-war period cast compatriots against one another, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights says.

* Secretary-General to send fact-finding mission to Nigeria, at request of Nigerian Government.

* Secretary-General in message of sympathy to China expresses condolences to families of earthquake victims.

* Following visit to Geneva, Secretary-General now in Paris.

* Asian Pacific Forum calls for re-invention of economic structure of cities.

* WFP chartered ship carrying food shipment to Democratic People's Republic of Korea, sinks in Taiwan Strait in stormy weather.

* Rome seminar appeals to donor community to reduce demands on limited human resources of post-conflict governments.

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The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Jose Ayala Lasso says new walls of misunderstanding in the post-cold-war period have cast peoples of the same countries against one another. They have also brought an explosion of terrorist acts with their many civilian victims, and have led to genocide and other mind-boggling and reprehensible acts. Addressing the 1996 session of the Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, Mr. Ayala Lasso urged the panel to find effective ways to respond to these threats, which otherwise can reverse hard-won progress over the last 50 years. He said international measures to promote human rights should not be seen as an infringement on nations, but as valuable assistance towards a common goal.

On the question of reform of the human rights machinery. Mr. Ayala Lasso said the process of reform can only be successful if the necessary financial and human resources are provided. The United Nations Human Rights programme had obviously been affected by the grave financial crisis confronting the Organization. The already extremely limited resources which were allocated for Human Rights in the regular budget for 1996/1997 had to be reduced by 2.7 million or approximately 6 per cent. There is absolutely no doubt that this reduction carries the risk of an adverse impact in the programmes and activities which the programme has entrusted to the office of the High Commissioner and the Centre for Human Rights, he said.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has decided to send a fact-finding mission to Nigeria, at the request of the Nigerian Government. The 4-member mission is expected to leave for the West African nation on 27 March. United Nations Spokesman Ahmad Fawzi said today that the mission is being sent in fulfillment of a mandate which the General Assembly had given the Secretary-General.

The mission therefore will address itself to two issues which are of concern to the international community. First, the trial and execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and others including the judicial procedures of the trial in the context of the various international human rights instruments to which Nigeria is a party and of relevant Nigerian law. Secondly, the mission will address itself to the plans of the Government of Nigeria to implement its declared commitment to restore the country to democratic rule. Upon completion of its work, the mission will report to the Secretary-General.

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It was with great sadness that the Secretary-General learned of the earthquake in northwestern China which killed at least 24 people, most of them children. A UN Spokesman said today that the Secretary-General has sent a message of sympathy to the Government of China expressing his condolences to the families of the victims.

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Following his visit to Geneva, the Secretary-General is now in Paris. Before leaving Geneva on Tuesday, Dr. Boutros-Ghali met with the United States Ambassador to the United Nations, Madeleine Albright. UN Spokesman Ahmad Fawzi says they discussed a number of issues including Iraq, the oil-for-food formula and the talks between the United Nations and the Iraqi Government. They also discussed the financial crisis of the United Nations, a number of questions also currently being discussed by the Security Council, particularly Western Sahara and the situation in Sudan.

Later, the Secretary-General also met Guy Olivier Segond, President of the Council of State of the Canton and Republic of Geneva. Mr. Segond informed the Secretary-General of a number of positive initiatives taken by Geneva to support the work of the United Nations. According to the UN Spokesman Mr. Segond said that Switzerland and Geneva would provide backing for the establishment of a telecommunications centre for humanitarian operations and secondly, he said that Geneva would back the organization in an event to mark the International year for the Eradication of Poverty. The Secretary-General on his part, said that Geneva was an important centre for the United Nations, for human rights and it was home to the second largest UN headquarters.

The Secretary-General also conferred with President Paul Biya of Cameroon, during which they discussed the recently launched UN System-wide Initiative for Africa. They also considered problems in Africa, including the situations in Burundi, Rwanda, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

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The Second Asian Pacific Forum has called for a re-invention of the economic structure of cities. It has also urged that urban policies should recognize the poor as an economic and social asset and not merely as a liability. The 5-day Forum also adopted a recommendation calling for the provision of access to education and information to the poor in order to create awareness of choices and opportunities. It further called for resources and/or credit for the development of income-generating opportunities for them.

The Forum urged governments to be more responsive to the peoples' real concerns for their cities and non-governmental organizations to enter into genuine partnerships with local and central authorities.

The Forum brought together policy makers, the private sector and research institutions for a discussion of the paper: "Living in Asian Cities: The Impending Crises". The conclusions reached during the meeting will be added to the paper for presentation as the Asia and Pacific input to the second UN Conference on Human Settlements (HABITAT II), scheduled for 3 to 14 June in Istanbul, Turkey.

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A ship chartered by the UN World Food Programme (WFP) to carry food shipment to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, has sunk in the Taiwan Strait in stormy weather, it was announced by the WFP today.

"We express our sadness over this tragic accident and our condolences to the many families who have suffered loss of their dear ones," said Catherine Bertini, Executive Director of the WFP, announcing the sinking of

the ship the Agency had chartered to carry its second shipment, 5,635 tons of rice, to the flood victims in the Democratic Republic of North Korea.

Because of its insurance arrangements, WFP said it can immediately release funds to replace the lost cargo.

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The responsibility of national governments and the international community for ensuring coordination of efforts in a constant partnership was emphasized at a seminar in Rome, on restoring government administrative machinery in situations of conflict. An appeal was also made to the donor community to reduce demands on the limited human resources of post-conflict governments.

The role of the United Nations in coordinating the funding procedures of multiple donors was seen as crucial to the success of post-conflict development efforts. Among the issues raised concerning the rebuilding of the administrative machinery were: creating security and stabilizing the immediate situation; rapid rebuilding of the economy; stimulating investments and establishing governance systems that strive towards consultation, consensus-building, communication, mediation and reconciliation.

Some 50 participants, including government Ministers and senior officials from eight countries and the Palestinian Authority, attended the seminar. Senior United Nations representatives from offices responsible for Cambodia and Somalia also attended.

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* Secretary-General expresses concern over Russian DUMA decision to revoke dissolution of former Soviet Union.

* In extremely positive meeting with French President, Secretary-General discusses UN reform and financial crisis.

* Secretary-General says political will to eliminate racial discrimination must be stronger on eve of new century.

* UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Occupied Palestinian territories says he is unable to get Israeli cooperation to fulfil his mandate.

* Ukrainian President and Director-General of UN Office in Geneva discuss cooperation on refugees, Chernobyl and countries in transition.

* Commission on Status of Women urged to call upon governments to prevent those who traffic in women and girls from misusing tourism and advanced information technology.

* Secretary-General expresses satisfaction that Guatemalan parties are suspending offensive military operations.

* Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs in El Salvador to assess state of implementation of peace accords.

* Five UN staff members kidnapped in Somalia.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has expressed concern over a decision of the Russian DUMA to revoke the dissolution of the former Soviet Union. In a statement through his Spokeswoman in Geneva, the Secretary-

General said the resolution, adopted by the Russian DUMA, is at variance with the universally recognized norms of international law, embodied in the Charter of the United Nations.

The Secretary-General said the resolution is not in accordance with the established regional cooperation mechanism, the Commonwealth of Independent States, the members of which are fully recognized and independent Member States of the United Nations. He however expressed confidence that efforts to develop and strengthen regional cooperation in the area will be carried out in conformity with internationally accepted procedures.

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In Paris today, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali met with French President Jacques Chirac in what has been described as a "useful and extremely positive" meeting. UN Spokesman Ahmad Fawzi says they discussed a number of topics: first and foremost was UN reform and the financial crisis of the Organization.

They reviewed negotiations between the United Nations and Iraq on the oil-for-food formula. They also discussed United Nations activities in the former Yugoslavia and other items on the agenda of the Security Council namely a number of African problems and the question of Western Sahara.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has said the political will to eliminate racial discrimination must be stronger on the eve of the new century. In a statement marking the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination being observed today, the Secretary-General said this is why human beings and their rights must be placed at the centre of the concerns of all States and peoples.

Dr. Boutros-Ghali said the commemoration awakens us to the resurgence of racist ideologies and practices, particularly in the economic and social spheres, to the persistence of the subtle forms of racism and racial discrimination that assume the shapes of nationalism or of national or continental preference. He said it also reminds us that the world is not free from xenophobia, hatred and ethnic conflict.

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In Geneva, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights in the occupied Palestinian territories says he is unable to obtain Israeli cooperation to fulfil his mandate. Hannu Halinen told the Commission on Human Rights that as a consequence, he is only able to visit Gaza which is now the headquarters of the Palestinian self-rule authority. He said measures taken by Israel, including closure of its borders due to

security incidents as well as the issue of prisoners and detainees are violations of human rights.

The policy of closure amounts to collective punishment in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, he said. It creates severe restrictions on the freedom of movement and the freedom of education as well as health concerns. Furthermore, it has an adverse effect on the fragile economic situation, leading to further deterioration in living conditions of the Palestinian population, he added.

The representative of Palestine Nabil Ramlawi told the Human Rights Commission that the Palestinian people had hoped that the current peace process would lead to an improvement in the human rights situation. To the contrary he said, it has deteriorated. The closure of the Palestinian territories has led to the deaths of a number of civilians and has created a state of hunger among the general population.

But Israeli Ambassador Yosef Lamdan said that Israel was at war against terror and was exercising its right of self-defence. He said no self-respecting government would act differently. Israel rejected the assertions that the measures it has been obliged to take are collective punishment or violation of human rights. The measures adopted, including the closure of territories are designed exclusively to prevent armed terrorists prepared to commit suicide from infiltrating into Israel, he said.

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Areas of cooperation between Ukraine and the United Nations were the focus of discussion today between President Leonid Kuchma of Ukraine and the Director-General of the UN Office in Geneva, Vladimir Petrovsky. A statement issued in Geneva today, said particular emphasis was placed on the problems of refugees, international assistance in mitigating the consequences of the Chernobyl accident, providing assistance to the European countries in transition, as well as the Ukrainian contribution to the budget of the United Nations. The two officials also discussed the activities of European regional organizations, including cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), in the area of preventive diplomacy.

Mr. Petrovksy outlined the work of the Geneva-based United Nations agencies and bodies and stressed the valuable contribution of Ukraine to United Nations efforts, in particular in the fields of disarmament, peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance.

* * *

The Commission on the Status of Women would call upon governments to prevent those who traffic in women and girls from misusing tourism and advanced information technology, including cyberspace. A draft resolution

exceedingly slowly and problems also remain with the public security sector. While efforts will be made to complete the accords before 30 April, the President acknowledged that there would be elements still pending in some of those areas.

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Five United Nations staff members have been kidnapped in Somalia on Thursday, a UN spokesman has confirmed. The UN workers had just flown into Mogadishu and were picked up at the airfield. Negotiations are still continuing with their captors. The spokesman said an appeal has already been made to the captors to release the staff members expeditiously and unharmed.

Four of the staff members are from the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the fifth from the World Health Organization (WHO).

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UNITED NATIONS

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F R I D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

* Secretary-General in message on World Water Day urges international community to act to avert impending water supply catastrophe.

* Secretary-General concludes visit to France; speaks on role of United Nations and democratic values.

* UN staff members kidnapped in Somalia freed.

* International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia indicts four for crimes against Bosnian Serb victims.

* UNHCR issues $30 million appeal for repatriation programme for Angola.

* Peace in regions affected by genocide brings complex challenges - UNHCR tells Human Rights Panel.

* UN video wins three major international awards.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has urged all providers and users of water to act together to avert an impending catastrophe in water supply. In a message marking World Water Day being observed today, the Secretary-General exhorted the international community to exercise its rights and responsibilities to provide water for rich and poor alike, for all competing users, equitably, reliably and affordably.

Dr. Boutros-Ghali said rapid population growth, urbanization and increasing urban poverty have made the goal of water for all seemingly unattainable, particularly in developing countries. He said despite warnings of an impending water crisis, the political will and commitment to tackle and solve this crisis is yet to be demonstrated. The Secretary-General reminded recipient nations of the need to put in place policies to ensure more sustainable water resources management.

For information media - not an official record

(more)

This year, World Water Day has a special focus: Water for Thirsty Cities. In a message on the Day, James Gustave Speth, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programmme (UNDP) said this was fitting, in conjunction with the second UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) or the "City Summit," in Istanbul this June. He said several fundamental issues relating to water must be addressed at Istanbul - among them, equitable distribution, financing, wastage and partnerships.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali this morning held discussions with French Prime Minister Alain Juppe. A United Nations Spokesman said they had an extensive tour d'horizon of a number of issues. In the afternoon, the Secretary-General went to the University of Bordeaux, where he received an honourary doctorate. In a speech concentrating on the major challenges facing the international community of tomorrow, he spoke about the role of the United Nations and the role that democratic values can play, emphasizing the democratic imperative and the international law of democracy.

Also in Paris, the Secretary-General met with French Foreign Minister Evid Charette during which they reviewed the financial crisis of the United Nations and UN reform. They discussed the agenda of the "G-7" summit due to be held in Lyons at the end of June to which the Secretary-General has been invited as an observer. They also discussed the question of negotiations with Iraq on the oil-for-food formula expressed in resolution 986. They reviewed the situation of Yemen and Eritrea, the question of the fight against international terrorism.

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In Somalia, the five United Nations staff members who were taken hostage in Mogadishu have been released. A UN Spokesman said they were released after local villagers on hearing the news of the kidnapping, intercepted and shot at the kidnappers before apprehending them. The hostages were released early Friday morning by the villagers, and are unharmed.

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The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia has announced the indictment of four alleged perpetrators of crimes against Bosnian Serb victims. A communique issued by the Tribunal says the indictment arises out of the operation of a detention facility known as the Celebici camp in Central Bosnia-herzegovina. UN Spokesman Ahmad Fawzi said today the indictment refers to events which took place in that camp during 1992. The detainees were Bosnian Serbs from the Konjic area who were subjected to serious violations of international humanitarian law.

The Prosecutor of the International Tribunal stressed that this illustrated the even-handed policy repeatedly stated by Mr. Goldstone,

namely "to investigate and prosecute persons who may be responsible for crimes irrespective of the political or ethnic group to which they belong." The investigations are evidence-driven and information from all informed sources about all crimes and all persons who may be responsible is welcome, the communique said.

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Participants in the all inclusive intra-East Timorese talks have confirmed the importance of continuing the talks between the Governments of Indonesia and Portugal under the auspices of the Secretary-General. In a declaration adopted by consensus after the conclusion of the talks in Stadt Schlaining. Austria, they expressed the hope of finding a just, comprehensive and internationally accepted solution to the question of East Timor.

Facilitated by the United Nations, the intra-East Timorese dialogue served to explore practical ideas that could have positive impact on the situation in East Timor and assist in creating a conducive atmosphere for a resolution of that question. 29 East Timorese, representing a broad cross-section of political opinion from inside and outside the Territory participated in the talks.

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The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has appealed for over $30 million for its repatriation programme this year for some 300,000 Angolan refugees. The $30 million needed this year will cover the cost of transportation, provision of water, sanitation, health, shelter and education facilities in areas where the refugees are likely to go back and repair roads and bridges.

Since the signing of the peace accord in November 1994, more than 14,000 Angolan refugees have returned spontaneously to their country. The return movement is expected to gain momentum once significant progress is achieved in the demobilization of troops and clearance of landmines on major routes.

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The most critical human rights test in Bosnia and Herzegovina currently involves the freedom of movement, UN High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata, has told the Commission on Human Rights in Geneva. She said despite formal assurances of the right of freedom of movement in the former Yugoslavia, the recent exodus of ethnic Serbs from Sarajevo and the burning and looting of suburban neighbourhoods, left her concerned that political blockages still in place would prove to be at least as powerful as the roadblocks which separated the communities during the year.

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"A Place to Stand" - the recently released video produced by the United Nations Department of Public Information for the 50th Anniversary of the UN has won three major awards in International competition. It won the coveted Golden Eagle CINE Award and the Telly award. It also won a World Silver Medal in the Broadcast category of the prestigious New York Festivals. "Portraits of Age", a popular UN video, won a finalist certificate in the New York Festivals in the Broadcast category.

In all three competitions, "A Place to Stand" was chosen from among several thousand entrants from around the world. Its television premiere in the United States was on the Arts and Entertainment History Channel and has been shown on television in several other countries.

Over the years, United Nations films and videos have won numerous international awards, ranging from an Oscar to the coveted Palm d'Or award.

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UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in Beijing on mission to strengthen UN-China relations.

* More people died from tuberculosis in 1995 than in any other year in history, WHO reports.

* Bitterness, fears and hatred of four years of war, underlying forces of Sarajevo Bosnian Serb population exodus: report by Secretary-General to Security Council.

* Only 400 police officers, deployed throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina during January and February: Secretary-General reports.

* Secretary-General expresses concern at Papua New Guinea decision to lift ceasefire on Bougainvillea.

* Asian regional conference on role of public administration in economic development calls for countries to share experience in good governance and institution-building.

* WFP begins emergency airlift of food to 22,000 people trapped by fighting in camps in western Liberia.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali is in Beijing on a five day mission aimed at strengthening relations between the United Nations and China. While in the Chinese capital, Beijing, the Secretary-General will discuss China's crucial role in global affairs, and in the United Nations in particular, with President Jiang Zemin, Premier Li Peng and Vice-Premier and Foreign Minister Qiang Qichen.

The Secretary-General will seek the views of China, a permanent member of the Security Council, on new ways the United Nations can work to reinforce international peace and security to promote development. He will also solicit ideas from Chinese leaders on how best to resolve the UN's financial crisis. United Nations Spokesman Ahmad Fawzi says the Secretary-

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(more)

General held a meeting today with Foreign Minister Qiang Qichen, during which he exchanged views on global issues ranging from the conflict in Afghanistan to the looming financial crisis, threatening the very existence of the United Nations.

The two leaders also discussed the issue of Taiwan. The Chinese Vice-Premier said China was committed to the reunification of China through peaceful means and to the "one country, two systems" formula, according to the UN Spokesman. Mr. Qiang Qichen said China's resumption of sovereignty over Hong Kong and Macau should serve as a model, and that rather than opposing the development of democracy in Taiwan, China objected to external interference and to those who advocated independence and separation.

The Secretary-General for his part, reiterated once again that the United Nations position was clearly spelt out in the General Assembly resolution. He also briefed the Chinese leader on the status of negotiations with Iraq on the oil-for-food formula. They also discussed the status of the comprehensive nuclear test-ban negotiations, with the Secretary-General expressing the hope that the treaty could be signed before the end of September 1996. China for its part, had made a commitment not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, he was told.

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The World Health Organization (WHO), says more people died from tuberculosis in 1995 than in any other year in history. According to a WHO report, nearly 3 million people died from TB in 1995, surpassing the worst years of the epidemic around 1900, when an estimated 2.1 million people died annually.

The WHO warned that the TB crisis will continue to grow unless immediate action is taken. At current rates, up to half a billion people could become sick with TB in the next 50 years. The report says increasingly, these people may become sick with often-incurable multi-drug resistant TB.

* * *

The bitterness, fears and hatred created by the past four years of war, are the underlying forces that led to the recent exodus of the Bosnian Serb population of Sarajevo, according to a progress report by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to the Security Council. However, he said the Bosnian Serb and the Federation authorities bear a great responsibility for this setback, as they did not show any determination to reassure and persuade the Serb population to stay on. This, he said, has resulted in another round of population movements along ethnic lines, further separating Bosnian Serbs and Bosnians, and delivering a telling blow to the multicultural nature of Sarajevo society.

According to the Secretary-General, the challenge in Bosnia-Herzegovina is to strengthen the links between the Bosnian Serbs and the Bosnian Federation authorities. The Secretary-General said the restoration of some degree of confidence at the political level is essential for the two entities to work together. But, he said it is understandable that the restoration of such confidence may be impeded by the deep wounds and distrust left by the conflict as well as by current political calculations. However, healing must be encouraged by conciliatory decisions and actions by the leadership of both sides.

The Secretary-General said in his report that persistent strains between the two parties are a major cause for concern. He cited a major territorial dispute in western Bosnia, disagreement over the status of Sarajevo, frictions between the two police forces and the failure of the parties to implement earlier agreements on economic and political matters, as factors that have exacerbated existing difficulties. He cautioned that unless the two communities make determined and sustained efforts to avoid conflict, establish cantons as agreed and strengthen Federation structures, divisive trends will increase.

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Only 400 police officers, have been deployed throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina during January and February, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In a report on the UN Mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Secretary-General said this figure included officers re-deployed from the UN Peace Forces (UNPF) mission, because only a few countries have been in a position to respond quickly to his request to provide police personnel for immediate deployment.

Only two-thirds of the monitors provided were deployed in Sarajevo to supervise the transfer of police authority to the Federation. It is important to recognize, he said, that the deployment of police officers to the United Nations missions depends on how swiftly Member States can release them from ordinary duty in their home countries. As of 15 March, a total of 67 monitors have been repatriated, 50 for not meeting the language criteria and 17 for not passing the driving test. To cope with this problem, the Department for Peace-keeping Operations has despatched a police selection assistance team to a group of countries to conduct in-country tests prior to the travel of the contingents. This, inevitably, has involved additional and avoidable expenditure, Dr. Boutros-Ghali said.

The Secretary-General has appealed to contributing governments to ensure that properly qualified personnel are provided for United Nations operations.

* * *

The Secretary-General has learned with concern of an announcement by the Government of Papua New Guinea that it has decided to lift the ceasefire

on Bougainvillea. UN Spokesman Ahmad Fawzi said today the Secretary-General regretted the loss of life resulting from the escalation of hostilities there.

He called on all parties to the conflict to exercise maximum restraint and to return to the negotiating table so as to find a lasting and peaceful settlement. The Secretary-General remained ready, as always to assist in facilitating a resumption of the peace process.

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A regional conference for Asia on the role of public administration in promoting economic development has concluded in the Philippines with a call for countries to share each other's experience in areas of good governance and institution-building. The Conference further recommended that, as a manifestation of Asian unity and cooperation, public administration assistance should be provided to countries in the region which were emerging from crises and conflicts.

It was also suggested that the United Nations hasten the setting up of a clearing house on management development which could be available to member countries on a regular basis. During the 3-day conference, participants exchanged views on policy planning and management, strengthening legal and institutional frameworks, civil service reform and training, resource mobilization and public expenditure management.

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The World Food Programme (WFP) has begun an emergency airlift of food to some 22,000 women, children and elderly people trapped by the fighting in camps in western Liberia. A WFP release says almost 100,000 refugees and displaced people have been trapped without food in Cape Mount County on Liberia's border with Sierra Leone, since fierce fighting closed the highway to the area in mid-December 1995. WFP officials in Monrovia said they were getting reports that five people a day were dying of malnutrition in Cape Mount County.

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* Secretary-General in Beijing meets with Chinese President and Premier on third day of five-day visit.

* UNRWA seriously concerned over negative impact of closures on Palestinian refugees.

* Health conditions inside Iraq deteriorating at alarming rates under sanctions regime according to WHO report.

* Preparatory Committee's session on Establishment of International Criminal Court underway.

* Japan contributes additional $47.4 million to UNDP Programmes.

* UNESCO's Director-General to launch action plans for Rwanda and Burundi.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali met with President Jiang Zemin and Premier Li Peng on the third day of his five-day mission to China. Their discussions covered a wide-range of topics such as the issue of Taiwan, the status of talks on East Timor and the heavy debt burden carried by Africa. The Secretary-General drew attention to the UN Systemwide Initiative on Africa designed to inject $25 billion into that continent over the next decade.

The Secretary-General noted the important role China plays in Africa and said he had rarely visited an African nation where the Chinese had not built roads, schools, hospitals and bridges. President Jiang said China attached great importance to Africa and said that in addition to economic aid, China was encouraging investment to promote economic and industrial development. But he found it worrisome that unlike Asians and Latin Americans, the Africans were seeing a widening of the North-South gap.

The Secretary-General, for his part, noted that Africa was still suffering from the aftermath of the colonial era and the Cold War, both of which had exacerbated the divisions caused by the multiplicity of languages and traditions.

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(more)

At the conclusion of a five day fact-finding visit to the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) Commissioner-General Peter Hansen, expressed concern over the negative impact of the closures on Palestine refugees. The refugees account for 78 per cent of the population in Gaza, and 38 per cent in the West Bank.

The Agency's operations had been disrupted by restrictions on the movement of staff and supplies, the Commissioner-General said. Schools, health centres and refugee shelters had been at a standstill for three weeks since the current closures were implemented. The proscription on Palestinian labourers from working in Israel meant a stoppage of daily wages while the tight control over the quantity and type of supplies entering Gaza, in particular, impeded business enterprises from operating. In the West Bank, the general decline in economic activity and the loss of jobs in Israel had led to a visible decrease in income and available cash.

The Commissioner-General has appealed to the Israeli authorities for an easing of the closure and permission for Agency staff movement. He has also met with Mr. Yasser Arafat, head of the Palestinian Authority and President of the elected Council, to review the situation.

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Health conditions inside Iraq are deteriorating at an alarming rate under the sanctions regime according to a World Health Organization (WHO) report. The United Nations humanitarian programme for that country lacks sufficient resources to cope with the growing problems, the report notes.

The vast majority of Iraqis continue to survive on a semi-starvation diet due to chronic shortages of both food and cash to buy it. Malnutrition among young children is now widespread; common symptoms include nutritional anaemia, vitamin A deficiency and protein-energy malnutrition. In addition, there are epidemics of malaria, cholera, typhoid and other infectious diseases.

The dramatic rise of mortality rates among infants and children is proof of the impact of such problems, the report states. For example, from 1990 to 1994, mortality in children less than five years of age, increased more than 600 per cent.

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The Preparatory Committee on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court has begun its three-week session. It is charged with preparing a widely acceptable consolidated text of a convention for such a court as a step towards consideration by a conference of plenipotentiaries. The Work of the Preparatory Committee is based on a draft statute prepared by the International Law Commission.

The Preparatory Committee will take into account views expressed in the Ad Hoc Committee on an International Criminal Court --open to all Member States or members of specialized agencies and established by the General Assembly in December 1994 to review the major substantive and administrative issues arising out of the draft statute. The Committee will also take into account views in the General Assembly's Sixth Committee (Legal) as well as

written comments of States.

The Committee has begun its work discussing the 'core crimes' which might be considered by the proposed court: genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and aggression. It has also discussed the need to properly define such crimes.

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Japan has contributed an additional $47.4 million to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for its activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Palestinian Territories, Rwanda and Cambodia. Capacity 21, the UNDP environment programme that helps developing countries meet national goals set at the 1992 Earth Summit, will also benefit.

More than $30 million will be provided to Bosnia and Herzegovina's reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts. In Rwanda, $5 million will be used to assist with the repatriation and resettlement needs of the refugees and internally displaced. In the Palestinian Territories more than $3 million will be used to promote employment and another $3 million for other UNDP projects. In addition, more than $1 million will be provided for Cambodia's de-mining programmes.

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The Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Federico Mayor, is this week launching action plans for Rwanda and Burundi to help rebuild and develop their educational systems, media and governing institutions.

The two-year plans, including some $1 million funding for each, were developed in consultation with the two countries' authorities and non-governmental organizations, as well as with UN agencies. The plans will build on current UNESCO programmes in Rwanda and Burundi to contribute to reconstruction, reconciliation and development of a culture of peace.

UNESCO's Director-General is expected in Rwanda Wednesday for discussions with government ministers and representatives of UN agencies. The following day, in Burundi, he will confer with members of the government and sign the UNESCO action plan for that country.

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